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Paper #2 Final Essay

12 October 2009

For The Sake of Order

Whether governing a country, bringing together a group of people for a special cause, or being the advocate for the average person, the concept of leadership will always be present for the sake of order. The discussion of leadership can be traced as far back as the sixth century B.C. using the writing *Thoughts from the Tao-te Ching* by Lao-Tzu. The *Thoughts from the Tao-te Ching* illustrate Lao-Tzu's advice for those who are or aspire to become successful leaders. Modern day leaders can benefit and learn from Lao-Tzu's thoughts because the advice given is still very much applicable in today's society and has been illustrated already in American history. Successful leaders such as, Harry S. Truman, Martin Luther King Jr., and Barack Obama have demonstrated Lao-Tzu's thoughts through their own acts of leadership and can support Lao-Tzu's ideas as decent advice for any leader to follow.

Harry S. Truman exemplified Lao-Tzu's thoughts when he declared to use the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Two cities that claimed to be devoted to war work during World War 2. The purpose of using such weapons was to rebuttal after Japan had denied any other peaceful means to end the war. Consequently, Japan did surrender and the security of the United States was restored. The actions of Truman during World War 2 confirm Lao-Tzu's idea of the use of weapons. Lao-Tzu states in verse 31, "Weapons are the tools of fear, a decent man will avoid them except in direst necessity...use them only with the utmost restraint." Because Japan was not willing to end the war quietly, Truman used such weapons as a means

to end the war immediately and sparingly. Therefore, what Truman did for the United States' security can represent Lao-Tzu's idea of using weapons only when it is necessary and to be used scarcely. This is good advice for modern day leaders because weapons are life threatening and should be used with full awareness that there are other ways to end conflict and using weapons is not the only solution to do so.

Civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. is another example to support Lao-Tzu's claims efficiently because Martin Luther King Jr. changed the course of American history with his efforts during the civil rights movement. In verse 17, Lao-Tzu advises, "The Master doesn't talk, he acts." The master that Lao-Tzu refers to is a leader and instead of the leader talking and preaching of his leadership, the leader must act on what he does preach. Martin Luther King Jr. was a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama and according to Nobleprize.org, he was also "...a strong worker for civil rights..." Martin Luther King Jr. not only preached for equality amongst the whites and blacks, he also acted upon his beliefs by participating in civil rights protests and accepting his role as president for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that promoted leadership for civil rights advocates. Lao-Tzu's thought of a leader not only talking but also acting is easily recognized by Martin Luther King Junior's accomplishments while trail blazing for equality. The advice given by Lao-Tzu is good advice for modern day leaders to be aware of, because Martin Luther King Jr. while suffering for his advocacy grew stronger as a leader and therefore set a precedent for leaders following him hereafter.

Current U.S. president, Barack Obama is the first African-American president. This triumphant victory is considered by Whitehouse.gov "...the American story." This

accomplishment changed the history of having all white males as presidents. Barack Obama's victory is easily linked to Lao-Tzu's thought because Barack Obama lived an average life that most American citizens can relate to. In verse 65, Lao-Tzu suggests, "If you want to learn how to govern...Content with an ordinary life, you can show all people the way back to their own true nature." Lao-Tzu's message captures that in order to lead, the leader must be comfortable with having an "ordinary life" and by doing this people will be guided back to their "true nature" or personal roots in order to remember where they came from. Because Barack Obama grew up in an everyday American middle-class household and valued hard work and education, success was deemed present for Barack Obama's future, yet this achievement would not have been possible if Barack Obama had no adversity in his life to overcome. Therefore, knowing Barack Obama's history and Lao-Tzu's advice on living an ordinary life will inspire modern day leaders to remember where they too started and help others to appreciate their own background.

So can advice that has been dated since the sixth century B.C. manage to be effective to this day? The answer is yes. Lao-Tzu's advice for leadership from *Thoughts from the Tao-te Ching* for modern day leaders is effective advice because modern examples from Harry S. Truman to Barack Obama show the evidence of the advice still being used and working toward their advantage. Interestingly, the principle of leadership will never change as long as there is a need to have order in the world. As order is needed, leadership is too, but not every person is fully aware of how to lead, so advice must be given in order to improve the leadership of the leader. Amusingly, the advice given just might be Lao-Tzu's advice dated from the sixth century, but if it worked for Harry S. Truman for atomic bombs, Martin Luther King Jr. for people's rights,

and Barack Obama for being the first African American president then it is just as new and innovative as Lao-Tzu placed it on paper.

Works Cited

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